

REMARKS

By this amendment, applicants have canceled claim 3 and non-elected claims 4 - 9 without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein.

Since the foregoing amendments merely cancel claims, entry of this amendment is proper under 37 CFR 1.116.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the personal interview conducted on August 15, 2003. Present at the interview were the Examiner, Catherine Simone, Primary Examiner Don Loney and the undersigned. During the interview, the differences between the present invention and the prior art were discussed. The undersigned proposed amending claim 3 to clarify the process by which the composite panel is made. The Examiner indicated the proposed amendments would raise new issues and would not be entered. Accordingly, it was agreed that claim 3 would be canceled and that the arguments presented at the interview concerning the differences between the present invention and the Lambing et al and Welsh patents would be provided to traverse the prior art rejections of record. Those arguments are set forth below.

Claims 1, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,160,771 to Lambing et al. Claims 11, 13 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lambing et al. Claims 14, 18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lambing et al. Applicants traverse these rejections and request reconsideration thereof.

One embodiment of the invention set forth in independent claims 1 and 12 is shown, by way of example only, in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows a composite panel including a first flat face sheet 11, a second flat face sheet 12, and a flat center core

member 13 provided between the first flat face sheet 11 and the second flat face sheet 12. The length of the first flat face sheet 11 is equal to a length of the flat center core member 13. An end portion 12a of the second flat face sheet 12 is positioned shorter than the end portion of the flat core member 13. The whole face of the first flat face sheet 11 is adhered to substantially a whole face of the flat center core member 13. The center core member, and the side of the end portion 12a of the second flat face sheet 12 is not adhered to the second flat face sheet 12, whereby the second flat face sheet 12 is partially adhered to the flat center core member 13. See, e.g., numbered paragraphs [0023] and [0024] of the substitute specification. It is submitted the invention set forth in independent claims 1 and 12 is neither disclosed nor suggested by Lambing et al.

The patent to Lambing et al discloses a metal-polymer-metal laminate made by joining adjacent laminate sections in a staggered relationship. Terminal portions of metal layers in a first laminate section are opposed to ends of fiber-reinforced polymer layers in a second laminate section. End portions of fiber-reinforced polymer layers in the first laminate section are opposed to ends of metal layers in a second laminate section. The two laminate sections are then joined by an adhesive layer. The Examiner refers to Figure 4 of Lambing et al which discloses a first laminate section 55 comprising a first metal layer 11, a second metal layer 15 and a third metal layer 60. A fiber-reinforced first polymer layer 20 joins the first metal layer 11 and the second metal layer 15 while a fiber-reinforced second polymer layer 65 joins the second metal layer 15 and the third metal layer 60. Thus, each of the layers appears to be completely adhered or joined to the adjacent layer. According to the present invention, on the other hand, as set forth in independent claim 1, the second flat face sheet is only partially adhered to the flat centered core member. As

set forth in independent claim 12, a first end portion of the second flat face sheet is adhered to a first end portion of the second major surface of the flat center core member while a second end portion of the second flat face sheet is not adhered to the second major surface of the flat center core member. By having such a construction, the second flat face sheet can be bent separately from the flat center core member in the manner shown in, e.g., Figure 2 of the subject application. Such is neither disclosed nor suggested by Lambing et al.]

Claims 3 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,890,108 to Welsh. In view of the cancellation of claim 3, this rejection is moot. In any event, it is submitted the Welsh patent does not disclose the invention set forth in any of the currently pending claims since it appears that, in Welsh, the entire exterior skin 12 and interior skin 14 is bonded to the core structure 16. See, e.g., column 2, lines 66 - 69 of Welsh. Accordingly, the Welsh patent does not disclose and would not have suggested the presently claimed invention.

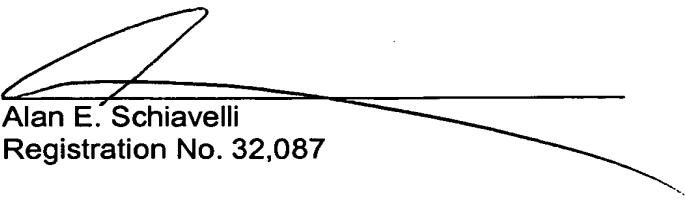
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, entry of this amendment and favorable reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims now in the application are requested.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli,

Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 503.39842X00),
and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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